

GORBACHEV TELLS THE LITHUANIANS TO TURN IN ARMS

INVOKES HIS NEW POWERS

Travel Curbs Are Imposed — Republic's Leader Likens Decree to Stalinism

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MOSCOW, March 21 — President Mikhail S. Gorbachev made use of his new executive powers tonight to tighten Soviet resistance to Lithuanian independence, ordering civilians in Lithuania to surrender private firearms to representatives of the central Government, and putting foreigners under stricter controls in traveling to the increasingly anxious republic.

The order, announced on the main evening television news program, was notice that Mr. Gorbachev did not intend to remain passive in the face of increased announcements by the Lithuanian authorities of measures to secure the independence from Soviet authority that they declared 10 days ago.

Mr. Gorbachev said he was obliged to issue the decree because the Lithuanian legislature continued "passing bills that violate the rights of Soviet citizens and the sovereignty of the U.S.S.R." [Text, page A16.]

Components of Separation

The Lithuanian authorities have called for volunteers for a "territorial defense system" and have been planning for a separate currency, international trade links and management of Soviet enterprises in the republic, measures that Moscow on Monday sought to counteract by ordering its ministries to protect national industries in Lithuania.

The new President of Lithuania, Vytautas Landsbergis, issued a statement late tonight saying that the Gorbachev decree had no authority. "It can be enforced only through brutal, armed force, and if the Soviet Union wishes to openly continue the aggression of 1940 against Lithuania," he said. "The ghost of Stalinism is walking in the Kremlin, and the shadow of it lies far to the West."

While the decree issued today heightened the important emotional element of the confrontation, it did not order any large-scale, overt action by the Soviet authorities or their troops. It was not immediately clear whether the Soviet leader, who has repeatedly sworn the use of military force to settle the dispute, was planning any more direct form of action.

Pressures From All Sides

Mr. Gorbachev has been dealing with an array of pressures beyond the Lithuanian declaration of independence. Principal among these is the view that further action of some sort is required to demonstrate the central Government's sovereignty over Lithuania, an opinion expressed at considerable length on Monday in the Soviet Parliament by hard-liners dismayed by the secession threat.

Through the months of the confrontation, Mr. Gorbachev has taken a dual approach to such pressures: one day he sharply criticizes Lithuania's authorities, and the next day he speaks in conciliatory tones, assuring the Lithua-

Continued on Page A16, Column 1

nian people that more might be done to guarantee their sovereignty.

Mr. Landsbergis has denied Mr. Gorbachev's right to interfere in Lithuania, saying that the Soviet annexation of the republic 50 years ago has now been formally undone. He has called for negotiations of the details of separation, while Mr. Gorbachev has talked only of a possible "dialogue" with the authorities in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital.

Mr. Gorbachev's order today was for more vigilant Soviet control of the border points that the Lithuanian authorities have vowed to take over. The order also suspended the sale of hunting rifles, the only weapons allowed for sale under Soviet law.

'Territorial Defense System'

The foreign travel and weapons restrictions are similar to emergency measures previously ordered by the Kremlin in cases of political and ethnic unrest and clashes in the Caucasus. The two years of the Lithuanian separatist drive, however, have been devoid of violent incidents between the Lithuanian majority and the predominantly Russian minority in Lithuania.

In recent days, the Lithuanian separatist movement has put up notices inviting volunteers to join the



Agence France-Presse

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"territorial defense system" in the republic, a measure that initially at least seemed more a part of the public relations struggle between Vilnius and Moscow than a serious confrontational act. Russians in Vilnius also announced a similar idea about vigilante protection.

The decree today, the first to be issued under Mr. Gorbachev's enhanced powers as President, specifically ordered national and "local governing councils" in Lithuania to insure "the observance of the federal Constitution and laws" and the protection of "the rights and legitimate interests of Soviet citizens living or staying in Lithuania."

The Lithuanian authorities have recently been busy on two fronts, pressing for negotiations with Moscow, and enacting a series of legislative measures to demonstrate independence as a fact. Something of a standoff has existed since Lithuania declared independence on March 11, with tensions rising in recent days as both sides engaged in psychological gambits short of direct confrontation.

Lithuania's authorities have been complaining about military games staged around the many Soviet military bases there. The Soviet authorities have expressed concern about the future of the republic's Russian minority.

Both Mr. Gorbachev and the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies have denounced the independence move as illegal, insisting that although the Soviet Constitution guarantees republics' right to secede, this case does not conform to constitutional law.

Lithuanian authorities say that the issue involves the reclaiming of an independence never legally surrendered, rather than being a case of secession.

New Secession Law Debated

Today, the standing Soviet Parliament, the Supreme Soviet, hurriedly debated revisions in the secession law. These would grant initial approval to a measure that requires referendum approval by two-thirds of a republic, provides a five-year period of negotiation with Moscow, and gives the final say in the matter to the Congress of People's Deputies, the larger Parliament forum.

It was not immediately clear at whom the tightened foreign travel restrictions were directed. The decree ordered Soviet Interior Ministry officials and prosecutors to "tighten control" over visas and travel permits to Lithuania and to "take essential measures to stop violations" of Soviet law that it said had been perpetrated "by foreign nationals staying in Lithuania."

A considerable number of volunteers from abroad, notably Americans of Lithuanian extraction, have gone to Lithuania on standard Soviet visas to give legal and organizational advice. Another category of travel document, a permit, is mainly needed by foreign

correspondents who travel regularly to Vilnius from Moscow.

Mr. Gorbachev's decree specified that all civilians in Lithuania had one week to turn in their firearms. The order was phrased to put the burden on civilians rather than to require the more confrontational option of troops actually searching for the arms.

Lithuania and its Baltic neighbors, Latvia and Estonia, were incorporated into the Soviet Union by Stalin after he and Hitler had reached a nonaggression pact on the eve of World War II that divided Europe into spheres of influence, with protocols awarding the then-independent Baltic republics to the Soviet Union. After the war, scores of thousands of residents of the Baltic republics were deported to Siberia.

U.S. Is Concerned

WASHINGTON, March 21 (AP) — The White House, citing a Soviet promise not to use force in Lithuania, reacted "with concern" today to reports that Mr. Gorbachev had ordered all arms confiscated in the republic.

"It's a matter that we are watching seriously," Marlin Fitzwater, President Bush's spokesman, said.

Asked if the Administration viewed an edict to turn in arms as tantamount to the use of force, Mr. Fitzwater replied, "I don't want to give it that kind of definition."

"We don't have enough information" to react to the development more specifically, he said.



Associated Press

Mikhail S. Gorbachev used his new powers yesterday to tighten Soviet resistance to Lithuanian independence. In Vilnius, independence was the theme of a display set up by the Lithuanian news agency Elta.